



DATCP and Element Mobile Reach Settlement for Service and Billing Issues

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MADISON – Wisconsin’s Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and Element Mobile, a Wisconsin Rapids-based company, reached agreement on a \$248,000 settlement aimed at resolving complaints related to the January 2011 transition from Alltel Wireless.

“This settlement is intended to provide closure for the Wisconsin customers who filed complaints with Consumer Protection against Element Mobile,” said Sandy Chalmers, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. “Element Mobile had a rocky start, but we hope this settlement allows the company to move forward, become a strong Wisconsin business, and provide quality services to its customers.”

Element Mobile began operations in January of 2011, taking over an eight-county territory in central and northern Wisconsin after Verizon purchased Alltel Wireless and abandoned the area. The Consumer Protection Bureau was swamped with complaints from Element Mobile customers in the first three months of 2011.

The settlement applies to customers who have filed complaints with DATCP about service outage issues that occurred between January and March 2011. The settlement addresses three categories of complaints: customers who paid an early termination fee, customers who had service outages and interruptions, and customers whose accounts were referred to collections agencies as a result of one of these issues.

Restitution for Element Mobile customers will vary depending on the nature of the complaint filed. According to the settlement:

1. Customers who paid an early termination fee to get out of an Element Mobile contract may be eligible to have the fee waived or repaid.
2. Customers who had service outages and interruptions in the first three months of 2011 may be eligible for a waiver or repayment of fees.
3. For consumers whose accounts were referred to collections for one of the issues above:
 - Element Mobile will stop collections efforts and will contact the three major credit bureaus to delete negative information on the consumers’ credit reports caused by the collections.
 - The company will send the three major credit bureaus a statement explaining that the collection effort was in error and provide a copy to consumers for their records.

Element Mobile customers who believe they may be affected do not need to take any action at this time. By mid-May, DATCP will send questionnaires to qualifying consumers in order to verify the amounts they may be entitled to receive under the settlement. Within four months of submitting the questionnaire, eligible consumers will receive releases from Element Mobile. These releases must be returned within 30 days in order to receive the adjustment.

For more information or to file a consumer complaint, visit datcp.wisconsin.gov, send an e-mail to datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov or call the hotline toll-free at 1-800-422-7128.

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